

# Thank you to our Partners

Kalamazoo Public Library leads Reading Together through the strength of its partners. We draw on a diverse cross-section of individuals and organizations to create a season of programs highlighting themes from the book that are relevant to our community.

The Reading Together partners are visionaries. They also are strategists who craft opportunities to connect with the book and its themes. They are experts who share personal history or skills or other resources. And finally, they are champions who engage friends, family, and all within their circles to experience how a community is strengthened through reading and discussing a single book.

### Community Groups

Battle Creek Kendo Club  
Fetzer Institute  
First Baptist Church  
First United Methodist Church  
Japan America Society of SW Michigan  
Kalamazoo Community Foundation  
Kalamazoo Race Exhibit  
Kalamazoo Valley Museum  
Loaves and Fishes  
Numazu Sister City  
Public Media Network  
Southwest Michigan Black Heritage Society  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Unitarian Universalist Church of SW Michigan  
YWCA

### Libraries

Kalamazoo Public Library  
Lawrence Memorial Library  
Parchment Community Library  
Paw Paw District Library  
Portage District Library  
Richland Community Library  
Vicksburg District Library

### Bookstores

Barnes & Noble Booksellers  
Kazoo Books  
Michigan News Agency

### National Organizations

442nd Regimental Combat Team Historical Society  
American Civil Liberties Union of SW Michigan  
Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community  
Consulate-General of Japan - Detroit  
Japanese American Veterans Association  
Manzanar Pilgrimage Committee

### Educational Institutions

Education for the Arts  
Kalamazoo Central High School  
Kalamazoo College  
Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
Western Michigan University  
Department of English  
Department of History  
Michitoshi Soga Japan Center



# Book Discussions

**Tuesday, March 9, 6:30 pm**

**Gallagher's Eatery**

15 S Kalamazoo St, Paw Paw

Sponsored by Paw Paw District Library, 657-3800

**Saturday, March 6, 10 am**

**Barnes and Noble**

6134 S Westnedge, 324-1433

**Thursday, March 11, 6:30 pm**

**Richland Community Library**

8951 Park St, 629-9085

**Friday, March 12, 11:30 am, 6:30 pm**

**Unitarian Universalist Church**

10441 Shaver Rd, 324-7262

**Friday, March 12, 1:30 pm**

**Crossroads Village**

6600 Constitution Blvd, 327-2100

**Tuesday, March 16, 10 am and 7 pm**

**Portage District Library**

300 Library Lane, 329-4544

**Friday, March 19, 6:30 pm**

**Lawrence Memorial Library**

107 N Main St, 746-4125

**Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

1515 Helen, 344-3966

**Wednesday, March 24, noon**

**WMU Faculty Dining Room**

Bernhard Center

# One Book, One Community

What if the entire community read the same book? Find out! Join Reading Together, a county-wide book club led by Kalamazoo Public Library. Since 2003, thousands of people from all walks of life have read and discussed the selected books and attended hundreds of Reading Together events.

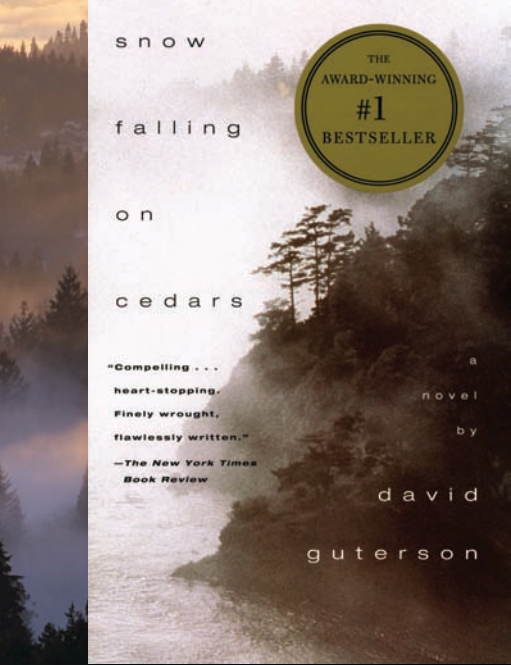


*I write because something inner and unconscious forces me to. That is the first compulsion.  
The second is one of ethical and moral duty.  
I feel responsible to tell stories that inspire readers to consider more deeply who they are.*

— David Guterson

[www.readingtogether.us](http://www.readingtogether.us)

# 2010 Reading Together



# Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson



KALAMAZOO  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

# About David Guterson

David Guterson's love of the landscape and culture of the Pacific Northwest inspires the settings and characters in *Snow Falling on Cedars*, for which he won the 1995 PEN/Faulkner Award and received a Guggenheim Fellowship for Fiction in 1996. After earning a masters in creative writing at the University of Washington, Guterson spent 12 years as a teacher and freelance author/journalist, before turning to writing fulltime. He lives on Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound with his wife and four children and spends every moment he can in Washington's out of doors.



### Bibliography

- *The Country Ahead of Us, The Country Behind*
- *East of the Mountains*
- *Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense*
- *Snow Falling on Cedars*
- *The Other*
- *Our Lady of the Forest*

# Meet the Author

See a live interview with author David Guterson. Books available for sale/signing. Doors open at 6 pm. Open seating; no ticket required.

**Wednesday, March 17, 7 pm**

**Kalamazoo Central High School Auditorium**

*Our grateful thanks to the Fetzer Institute for their sponsorship of David Guterson's visit.*

FETZER INSTITUTE

# About the Book

San Pedro Island, north of Puget Sound, is so isolated that no one who lives there can afford to make enemies. But in 1954 a local fisherman is found suspiciously drowned, and a Japanese American, Kabuo Miyamoto, is charged with his murder.

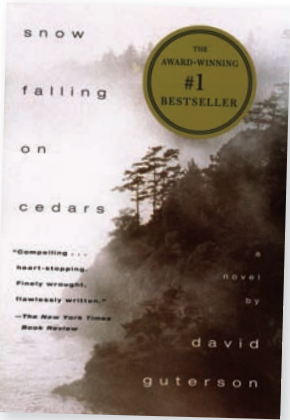
In the course of the ensuing trial, it becomes clear that what is at stake is more than one man's guilt. On San Pedro, memory grows as thickly as cedar trees and fields of ripe strawberries—memories of a charmed love affair between a white boy and the Japanese girl who grew up to becoming Kabuo's wife; memories of land desired, paid for, and lost.

Above all, San Pedro is haunted by the memory of what happened to its Japanese residents during World War II, when an entire community was sent into exile while its neighbors watched. Gripping, tragic, and densely atmospheric, *Snow Falling on Cedars* is a masterpiece of suspense—one that leaves us shaken and changed.

Compelling... heart-stopping. Finely wrought, flawlessly written."  
—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Luminous...a tender examination of fairness and forgiveness..." —*Time*

"Haunting...A whodunit complete with courtroom maneuvering and surprising turns of evidence and at the same time a mystery, something altogether richer and deeper." —*Los Angeles Times*





# Discussion Questions

- Check [www.readingtogether.us](http://www.readingtogether.us) for a chapter-by-chapter study guide.
- 1

*Snow Falling on Cedars* opens in the middle of Kabuo’s trial. It will be pages before we learn the crime of which he has been accused or the nature of the evidence against him. What effect does the author create by withholding this information and introducing it in the form of flashbacks? Where else are critical revelations postponed?
- 2

When the trial begins, San Piedro is in the midst of a snowstorm, which continues throughout its course. What role does snow play in the book? How does nature shape this novel?
- 3

Guterson divides his island setting into four zones: the town of Amity Harbor; the sea; the strawberry fields; and the cedar forest. Which characters are associated with them? How does the author establish a different mood for each setting?
- 4

Guterson imparts a fair amount of critical information in a casual manner, often camouflaging it amid material that will turn out to have no further significance. What does this suggest about the value assigned to things that might be considered random or irrelevant?
- 5

When Carl’s body is dredged from the water, the sheriff has to remind himself that what he is seeing is a human being. While performing the autopsy, however, Horace Whaley forces himself to think of Carl as “the deceased...a bag of guts, a sack of parts” [p. 54]. Where else are people depersonalized—either deliberately or inadvertently? What role does depersonalization play within the novel?
- 6

Did the material evidence against Kabuo provoke the investigators’ suspicions, or only reinforce their preexisting misgivings about Carl’s death? How does the entire notion of a murder trial—in which facts are interpreted differently by opposing attorneys—fit into this book’s thematic structure?
- 7

Ishmael, Hatsue, Kabuo and Carl all exhibit a sense of estrangement. How is it manifested?
- 8

What significance is there to Ishmael’s name? What does he have in common with the narrator of *Moby-Dick*, another story of the sea?
- 9

How has the war affected characters in this book, both those who served and those who stayed home?
- 10

“On San Piedro the silent-toiling, autonomous gill-netter became the collective image of the good man” [p. 38]. Thus, Carl’s death comes to signify the death of the island’s ideal citizen. How productive does silent individualism turn out to be? To what extent is Carl a casualty of his self-sufficiency? What other characters adhere to a code of solitude?
- 11

Racism is a persistent theme in this novel. How do the book’s Japanese characters respond to the hostility of their white neighbors? How does bigotry manifest itself in the thoughts and behavior of characters Art Moran, Ismael Chambers, and Etta Heine, whose racism is keenly ironic in view of her German origins? Are we meant to see these characters as typical of their place and time?
- 12

What is the significance of the novel’s last sentence: “Accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart”?

# Events

All events are free and open to the public, except as noted.

## Japanese Film Festival Little Theater, Oakland Drive

Presented by the Soga Japan Center at Western Michigan University. Free. Japanese with English subtitles.

### Always: Sunset on Third Street Wednesday, February 17, 7 pm

It’s 1958 and residents of a working-class Tokyo neighborhood look forward to Christmas, better lives, and a new TV set in *Always: San-chome no Yuhi*.

### Memories of Matsuko Wednesday, February 24, 7 pm

Matsuko believes in true love and living happily ever after—even as her life spirals down with one horrible misfortune after another in *Kiraware Matsuko no Issho*.

### I Just Didn’t Do It Wednesday, March 10, 7 pm

Criminal trials result in a 99.9% conviction rate in Japan. That’s not good for a young man falsely accused of groping a school girl in *Soredemo Boku wa Yattenai*.

## Children’s Art from Shiga, Japan Saturday, February 20, 2-4 pm Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane

This closing reception for an exhibition of artwork created by children in Shiga Prefecture, Michigan’s sister state, features demonstrations of calligraphy, origami, storytelling, Japanese food, and music by Suzuki Academy students.

## Toward Wholeness and Community Sundays, February 21 – March 28, 9:30 am First United Methodist Church, 212 Park St

Throughout history, great literature has contributed to change in society. What can the themes of *Snow Falling on Cedars* teach us about living peacefully in our community?

## Avid Reader Toolkit Wednesday, February 24, 6:30 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

Designed for readers who love nitty-gritty details, this “toolkit” provides resources to enrich reading and discussing *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Registration required; call 553-7913.

## A Conversation About Race Tuesday, March 2, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

YWCA’s Racial Justice program will lead this discussion of *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Registration required; call 553-7913.

## For the Sake of the Children (Kodomo No Tame Ni) March 5 – April 14 Kalamazoo Public Library 315 S Rose St

This exhibition inspired David Guterson to write *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Four generations of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island are documented in photographs.



## “Go for Broke!” – The 442nd March 5 – April 14 Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

Images of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team from the National Archives. The largest Nisei unit during WWII, the 442nd is the most decorated combat unit of its size in the history of the United States Army.

## The Book as a Literary Classic Tuesday, March 9, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

WMU English professor Nicolas Witschi looks at the rich characterization, imagery, plot, and setting that make *Snow Falling on Cedars* an engaging, compelling classic.

## See the Movie! *Snow Falling on Cedars* Friday, March 12, 7 pm Kalamazoo Valley Museum, 230 N Rose St

Starring Ethan Hawke, Max Von Sydow, and Youki Kudoh. Nominated for an Oscar in cinematography. Tickets, \$3.

## Shodo, Japanese Calligraphy Tuesday, March 16, 6 pm or 7:30 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

Shodo, the Japanese version of calligraphy, uses ink and brush. Learn how to write your name in this lovely, precise art form. Registration required; call 553-7913.

## Japan and Modern History Thursday, March 18, 6 pm Fetzer Center Auditorium, WMU

The government of Japan awarded Carol Gluck, Columbia University professor of history, the Order of the Rising Sun in 2006. Her forthcoming book is *Past Obsessions: World War Two in Japanese History and Memory*.

## Understanding Diverse Cultures Sunday, March 21, 2 pm Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane

Talk about books that spark spirited conversations about multiculturalism, ethnicity, diversity. Co-sponsored by the Southwest Michigan Black Heritage Society.

## Origami Monday, March 22, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library 315 S Rose St

Try your hand at origami, the Japanese art of folding paper into beautiful creations. Family-friendly program open to all ages. Registration required; call 553-7913.



## Kendo: The Way of the Sword Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

See the Battle Creek Kendo Club demonstrate kendo—the Japanese martial art known as “the way of the sword.” Family-friendly program open to all ages.

## How Nisei Served in WWII Thursday, March 25, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

120,000 Japanese-Americans were forcibly detained in WWII relocation camps, yet some volunteered for U.S. military service. Iwao Ishino and Sadayoshi Omoto will tell their stories of internment and military intelligence. WMU history professor Takashi Yoshida will moderate.

## Chanoyu: The Way of Tea Saturday, March 27, 2 pm Kalamazoo Public Library 315 S Rose St

Observe chanoyu, the Japanese ceremony of preparing and presenting tea, followed by a show of Japanese kimonos. Family-friendly program open to all ages.



## Korematsu v U.S. Wednesday, March 31, 7 pm Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose St

WMU professor Mark Hurwitz discusses WWII internment of Japanese-Americans, the ACLU’s fight against it, one of the U.S. Supreme Court’s darkest moments, and Fred Korematsu’s courage and ultimate vindication.

## Putting Human Back into Human Rights Thursday, April 15, 6:30 pm First Baptist Church, 315 W Michigan Ave

What can history teach us about solving today’s conflicts? Hear an inspiring presentation by Frank Kitamoto, interned at Manzanar in WWII. See *For the Sake of the Children*, a photo exhibit, and enjoy taiko (Japanese drumming). Co-sponsored by the WMU Race Exhibit.